

Election Observer Panel Plan Procedures
For Submission to the SOS for the
May 19, 2009 election
Per CC/ROV 09051

County and system information:

County Sacramento
Contact Alice Jarboe, Assistant Registrar
Phone 916 875-6255
Vendor/System ESS/Optical Scan
Date April 2, 2009

I. Purpose

The purpose of an Election Observer Panel is to:

1. Provide an avenue for public observation of and input into the election process.
2. Assist in ensuring the integrity of the election process.
3. Encourage participation and build voter confidence in the election process.

II. Invitation

Between E-60 and E-30, prepare a media release and letters of invitation (see samples attached) to parties likely to participate, such as the following:

1. County Grand Jury
2. Political Party Central Committee Members
3. Spanish Language Advocacy Groups
4. League of Women Voters
5. Media
6. Other groups or individuals expressing an interest in observing election day activities may also be included in the observer panel, as deemed appropriate.

Group Presentations:

After letters of invitation have been sent out, offer to attend group meetings to provide an opportunity for the groups to ask questions about the process. Groups should be contacted to arrange time on their agendas for staff presentations. This is optional at the request of the group, but staff should make every effort to contact the groups and offer this service.

Appointment Letters (for introduction to precinct workers)

After the groups have provided the names of interested panelists, prepare letters of introduction (see sample attached) for the panelists to use when visiting polling places on Election Day. Materials to be prepared for each panelist will include a listing of all polling places within the county for that specific election as well as the central counting site location and hours of operation.

III. Mechanism for Feedback

Contact observers / groups invited to observe and request a few minutes on their next agenda to discuss their observations and request their input on the election processes.

General Rules for Observers

Observers may:

- Observe the proceedings at the polls, including the opening and closing procedures.
- Obtain information from the precinct index that is posted near the entrance.
- Make notes and watch all procedures.
- View all activities at the central counting site on election day.
- View the canvass of the vote activities following the election.
- View absentee and provisional ballot processing.
- Ask questions of staff or voters at the polls.
- Ask questions of supervisors at the central counting site.

Observers are responsible for:

- Checking in at each site, whether polling place or central counting site.
- Wearing an identification badge.
- Maintaining a professional manner while observing the election processes.
- Ensuring they do not interfere with the elections process.

Observers may not:

- Interfere in any way with the conduct of the election.
- Touch any voting materials or equipment or sit at the official worktables.
- Converse with voters (within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place) regarding the casting of a vote, or speak to a voter regarding his or her qualifications to vote.
- Display any election material or wear campaign badges, buttons or apparel.
- Wear the uniform of a peace officer, a private guard, or security personnel.
- Use cellular phones, pagers, or two-way radios inside the polling place and/or within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place.
- Talk to central counting site workers while they are processing ballots.
- Use the telephones, computers or other polling place facilities at polling places or the central counting site.
- Touch election personnel.
- Eat or drink in the polls or the central counting site.
- Assist in operations at any polling place.

Sample Letter of Invitation

XXXX, 200X

«District_Name»
«First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Address_Line_1»
«City», «State» «ZIP_Code»

Dear: «First_Name» «Last_Name»

Sacramento County Elections will convene an Election Observer Panel to observe activities associated with the Statewide XXX Election, which will be held on XXXX, 200X. Representatives of the County Central Committees, Spanish advocacy groups, media and the Sacramento County Grand Jury are invited to participate.

The following lists of activities are open for participation;

- Logic and Accuracy Testing (Week of XXX)
- Manual Tally Drawing (Monday XXX)
- Election Day Polling Place Visits (Election day)
- Election Night Observations of Central Count
- Canvass of the Vote (XXX through XXX)

Typically, members of these activities observe and comment on the process, although participation is encouraged, it is not required. Members of the Panel will be provided with the information prior to the beginning of these activities.

If your organization would like to be represented on the Election Observer Panel, please notify me by mail, phone (916) 875-6365 or by email at buyseb@saccounty.net. Please respond by XXXX, 200X, with the name of your representative. I will be available to meet with Panel members to explain their role in greater detail and to provide each with the information they will need.

Very truly yours,

Brad R. Buyse
Campaign Services Manager

Sample Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
XXXX, 200X

CONTACT: Brad Buyse, 875-6365

MEDIA ADVISORY **Registrar of Voters Election Update**

Sacramento County Prepares for Logic and Accuracy Testing for XXXX 200X Statewide XXX Election

Sacramento County Elections announced today that logic and accuracy testing for their voting machines will begin on XXXX, 200X and run continuously until completed.

“Interested parties can observe our testing of each machine for accuracy in the tabulation of votes,” says Registrar of Voters Jill LaVine. If you are interested in viewing this procedure, please contact Brad Buyse at (916) 875-6365 for the schedule.

To get information about the upcoming election, as well as details on registering to vote and applying for a Vote-by-Mail ballot, visit our web site at www.saccounty.net/elections or call (916) 875-6451.

For more information, contact Brad Buyse at (916) 875-6365 or (916) 599-0368 cell.

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Sample Letter of Introduction

Date (no later than E-5)

TO: Precinct Inspectors

FROM: XXX
Registrar of Voters/County Clerk

SUBJECT: ELECTION OBSERVER PANEL

This letter introduces XXX, whom I have appointed to the Election Observer Panel for the XXX election. Members of the Election Observer Panel are invited to observe activities related to the administration of an election, including visiting polling places.

No person, including a member of the Election Observer Panel, may interfere with the operation of polling places. XXX and other members of the Election Observer Panel may ask you to explain certain operations and procedures. Please extend every courtesy to XXX.

If you have any questions, please call me at xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for your cooperation and your service to our county's voters.